



UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES
4301 JONES BRIDGE ROAD
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-4799



Office of the Dean
School of Medicine
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MEMORANDUM FOR FACULTY, STAFF, MEDICAL STUDENTS

SUBJECT: Student Work Hours

- A. Purpose. In compliance with current accreditation requirements from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (*see Enclosure 1*), this memorandum establishes policy regarding student work hours.
- B. Background. *See Enclosure 2.*
- C. References. *See Enclosures 3.*
- D. Policies and Responsibilities.
 - 1. The welfare of the USU medical students on clinical clerkships is the responsibility of the dean's office and the academic departments that sponsor clerkships.
 - 2. Military treatment facilities and other sites hosting medical students for clinical rotations should act in accordance with academic policies established by the USU School of Medicine.
 - 3. The average number of weekly hours that third year medical students participate in their required clinical and/or educational activities on clinical clerkships shall not exceed the average number of hours that housestaff spend in required clinical and/or educational activities.
 - 4. Specific daily work schedules will vary by clerkship, and are most appropriately determined by the USU clerkship and local MTF site directors. These must remain consistent with the policy set forth herein.
 - 5. Clinical departments are responsible for maintaining a system for regularly monitoring the hours students spend in clinical and/or educational activities on clinical clerkships.
 - 6. The time students spend on educational activities outside the clinical setting (independent reading, preparation for clinics, didactics, working on write-ups)

will be considered separately from other required activities that take place in the clinical care environment.

7. Fourth-year students in required clerkships, electives and subinternships should, at a minimum, adhere to existing ACGME work hour guidelines.



Larry W. Laughlin, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean, School of Medicine

Educational Directive (ED) 38 from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) addresses the time spent by medical students in required activities during clinical clerkship. Specifically, the directive reads:

***ED-38:** The committee responsible for the curriculum, along with medical school administration and educational program leadership, must develop and implement policies regarding the amount of time students spend in required activities, including the total required hours spent in clinical and educational activities during clinical clerkships.*

Attention should be paid to the time commitment required of medical students, especially during the clinical years. Students' hours should be set taking into account the effects of fatigue and sleep deprivation on learning, clinical activities, and student health and safety.

BACKGROUND:

Since July 2003, the majority of national residency training programs have followed the mandate from the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), limiting housestaff duty hours to an average of 80 per week (averaged over 4 weeks) and no more than 30 hours consecutively. Individual residency programs and/or institutions have embraced the mandate to different degrees, and have developed wide ranging internal policies to meet these restrictions. There are several articles in the literature describing how resident work-hour restrictions impact medical student perceptions and education, but very little about medical student work restrictions.

KEY WORKING POINTS:

1. Patient safety will not be compromised because students do not make independent medical decisions for patients.
2. Without hour limitations, there may be an adverse effect on student safety similar to that seen in residents.
3. Excessive required clinical and/or educational hours decrease the students' time available for self-directed learning.
4. Most schools for whom data is available limit the required number of medical student hours in a manner similar to those of the house staff.
5. In some specialties, usually surgical, students felt that there was a decrease in quantity and quality of faculty and resident teaching and/or feedback (with duty hour restrictions on the housestaff).

REFERENCES

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